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7. — *The English of Shakespeare; illustrated in a Philological Commentary on his Julius Cæsar.* By GEORGE L. CRAIK, Professor of History and of English Literature in Queen's College, Belfast. Edited from the Third Revised London Edition, by W. J. ROLFE, Master of the High School, Cambridge, Mass. Boston: Crosby and Ainsworth. 1867.

THE author of this book is known to most of us by his "History of English Literature and of the English Language," which was republished in this country in 1864; and his "Pursuit of Knowledge under Difficulties" has been a favorite food for a generation of young Americans. His "Spenser and his Poetry" has also been long a hand-book with the students of that sage and serious poet, and the appreciation of it in America had led him to prepare a new edition just before he died. He had been Professor of History and of English Literature in Queen's College, Belfast, since 1849. He was born in 1799, in Fifeshire, the son of a schoolmaster, and he worked in London from 1824 to 1849. He wrote many books on a great variety of subjects, and many articles for the Penny Cyclopædia and the British Quarterlies. He was a hearty, hard-working, abounding man, — of good, sound sense, ardent love of English literature, and wide acquaintance with it, and of scholarship enough to gather interesting facts about language, without running wild after etymology and the like. He was skilful in discerning and supplying the popular needs. He has shown his skill in the title of this book, — "The English of Shakespeare." What a wealth of promise has that on the back of a volume of four hundred pages!

This book contains, as prolegomena, a brief account of Shakespeare's personal history; of his works; the sources for the text of his plays; his editors and commentators; the modern Shakespearian texts; the mechanism of English verse, and the prosody of the plays of Shakespeare; and the history of the play of "Julius Cæsar." Then follow a carefully studied text of that play; a philological commentary on it; and last, not least, a good verbal index, a look at which shows us that the notes contain discussions of some six hundred words.

The five first prolegomena are brief. Since the spelling and pronunciation of Shakespeare's name are discussed, the decisive reasons for spelling *Shakespeare* rather than *Shakspeare* should have been given; we mean the fact that Shakespeare himself used it in all the books which he published, — the "Venus and Adonis," and "The Rape of Lucrece," — and that it is used in the Folio of the Plays. It is time that the printers should learn that *Shakspeare* is a blunder, or, at least, should let us say *Shakespeare* without repeated corrections of the proof.

The discussion of the prosody of Shakespeare's plays is quite full ; the laws of his versification are given with more accuracy than in any other easily accessible book ; and the facts here brought together are a valuable contribution to our knowledge of the language of Shakespeare, and the changes which his versification underwent at different times of his life.

The evidence in the other plays that the character of Julius Cæsar made a deep impression on Shakespeare, and that the play was long growing in his mind, is also interesting in itself ; and the discussion of it here may be important as a model for similar investigations of the mind and inner life of Shakespeare. For surely we have facts before us in these plays for making out a life of Shakespeare with great certainty and minuteness, if we only had the eyes to see, and if the right method of induction were made familiar to us. It is doubtful whether any man has left us a more complete record than Shakespeare has of the subjects which occupied his mind, and of how he stood related in feeling and sympathy to all matters of human interest. But a legitimate induction is not always easy.

The text of the play of "Julius Cæsar" is good. Professor Craik has for the first time numbered the speeches for convenience of reference. This is good. We are going to study Shakespeare, and we should have texts in which the lines of the speeches more than ten lines long are also numbered. The first folio, it is well known, gives a fairly correct text, the best in the volume ; and Professor Craik has been careful to preserve it for the most part. He spells and points it according to the modern English standards, and occasionally rearranges lines for the metre. He also corrects mistakes in proper names and dates. In some cases, perhaps, it would be better to retain the old spelling, and mistaken dates and names, in texts intended specially for study, and put corrections in the notes. Craik might retain *swooned*, *swoond*, for *swoon*, *swooned* (Act I. Sc. ii. 82, 83) ; and for *an* (if), (89) ; *I* for *aye* (54) ; *a-nights* for *o'nights* (65) ; *mettle* for *metal* (105) ; *a clocke* for *o'clock* (745) ; *vildely* for *vilely* (Act IV. Sc. iii. 574) ; on the same principle as he keeps *moe* for *more*. *First of March* for *ides of March* (Act II. Sc. i. 149) is in Plutarch, and more likely to be a blunder in the copy than the proof ; so *fifteen days* for *fourteen days* (154), *Calphurnia* for *Calpurnia*, and the like. The disposition to stand by the original texts grows from year to year. Some of Craik's variations are plainly wrong ; as, *but with awl* for *but with all* (Act I. Sc. i. 12) ; *crouchings* for *couchings* ; *crouched* for *crooked* (Act III. Sc. i. 304) ; *death* for *Lethee* (348). Many which may be right are not clear enough to give them a place in the text. Of the three new readings proposed by Craik, neither seems to demand admission to the text, though all are

worthy of mention in a note. "*What night is this?*" (Act I. Sc. iii. 117), and "*Has he, Masters?*" (Act III. Sc. ii. 401), make a good sense. It is not necessary, therefore, to change the text to "*What a night is this?*" and "*Has he not, Masters?*" Two lines are altered in Act IV. Sc. iii. 520, because it is thought that Lucius rather than Lucilius ought to be sent with an order to the commanders; but Lucilius is afterwards sent on the same duty (579), and the folio may have followed Shakespeare's copy. That we think we can improve it, is no reason for mending it.

Changes in punctuation in Shakespeare's plays have been made pretty much at the pleasure of the editors; and the plain want of skill, as well as the frequent blundering in the sense, in the pointing of the original texts, gives their procedure some countenance. But it may be doubted whether these changes have not been carried beyond the limits of an allowable license. The pointing of the original often shows plainly how the passage was understood, even when it does not accurately express this understanding; and such a meaning ought not to be changed except for reasons which would justify the change of a word. Grant White, perhaps the most sane and alert of all the editors, has not always observed this rule; he sometimes cuts up passages badly with his pointing. Compare the following from "*Measure for Measure*": —

"To be imprison'd in the viewlesse windes  
And blowne with restlesse violence round about  
The pendant world; or to be worse than worst  
Of those, that lawlesse and incertaine thought,  
Imagine howling, 't is too horrible."

But White reads: —

"To be imprison'd in the viewless winds  
And blown with restless violence round about  
The pendent world; or to be, worse than worst,  
Of those that lawless and uncertain thoughts  
Imagine, howling! — 't is too horrible." — Act III. Sc. i.

The pointing of the folio is plainly wrong; the pointing of White as plainly tears the passage to tatters.

Another case occurs in "*Julius Cæsar*," Act V. Sc. i. 708. The folio reads: —

"Even by the rule of that Philosophy,  
By which I did blame *Cato*, for the death  
Which he did giue himselfe, I know not how:  
But I do finde it Cowardly, and vile,  
For feare of what might fall, so to preuent  
The time of life, arming my selfe with patience," &c.

The editors generally have felt perfectly at liberty to put a full pause after *himself*. Craik sometimes transgresses in the same way. But he mentions his changes in the notes, and his text is on the whole good.

The philological commentary is also admirable. It is the fullest discussion yet given to the language of any of Shakespeare's plays. Every word or phrase, whose meaning could give rise to a reasonable doubt, even to a student unversed in the older literature, is examined and explained at length; the history and etymology are given as far back as the Anglo-Saxon or Latin original, and illustrative examples quoted from other parts of Shakespeare, other authors, or the Bible. Words and phrases having analogous forms or history are also freely brought in. So that quite a little philological tractate springs out of a single word. The first note, for example, is on "*you ought not walk*," and is three full pages in length. The absence of *to* gives rise to a history of the facts connected with the use of that preposition with the infinitive in Anglo-Saxon and down to our own times. This is made lively by apt quotations. Then the history of *ought* is given, and its changes of meaning from *have* or *own*, first to *owe*, then to *ought*, are explained and illustrated. The second note has two pages and a half on the word *laboring* (*upon a laboring-day*). There is a note of ten pages on *its*, three of which are added by the American editor; another of more than two pages on *merely*, and there are other considerable essays on *shrewd*, *shrewd*; on *statue*; on *shall* and *will*; on *had as lief*; and on the prefix *be*-. But most of the notes are shorter; they give a brief explanation, mention some interesting philological fact or illustration, and do not aim at any exhaustive treatment even of the word or phrase explained.

The first note offers a good illustration of the merits and defects of this part of the book. It is copious, lively, clear, and in the main correct. But it is rather too long, is not quite accurate in all its statements, and does not try to give reasons. Thus it quotes: "Originally," says Dr. Guest, "the *to* was prefixed to the gerund, but never to the present infinitive; as, however, the custom gradually prevailed of using the latter in place of the former, the *to* was more and more frequently prefixed to the infinitive, till it came to be considered as an almost necessary appendage of it." The fact is, that *to* is sometimes used with the infinitive in Anglo-Saxon, and that this use becomes more and more frequent, till in Layamon it is the common form, while the "gerund" is still used hardly oftener than in Anglo-Saxon. The reason for these facts is to be found in the analytic habit of the English, which came to express all sorts of relations by independent words, instead of inflection-endings; and this habit is a natural result of the progress of the race in

discriminative thought, while its particular form in this case is modified by the mixture of the Anglo-Saxon and Norman races. In such commingling of peoples the inflection-endings of their languages are not easily caught, and rapidly drop away.

In discussing the change of Anglo-Saxon *ágan* to *owe*, instead of a statement of the phonetic laws by which the changes take place, there is a long popular talk to show that there is really no change at all to speak of, — if we only suppose the *á* and the *g* to have been pronounced in a certain way, which Professor Craik describes. He says that "*owe* is etymologically the same with *own*." "The Anglo-Saxon word is *ágan*"; "the *n* may be the *en* of the ancient past participle *ágan*." "So we have both to *awake* and to *awaken*, to *ope* and to *open*." Now *owe* is from Anglo-Saxon *ágan* (Layamon, *azen*, *aze*); *own* is from *ágnian* (Layamon, *azene*, *ahne*, *owene*). This is the more noteworthy, because even the last Webster derives the verb *own* from the adjective *own*, which is (by misprint we suppose) called a "p. pr. of *ágan*." The comparison with *ope* and *open* has less excuse; *ope* is an abbreviation of *open*. There is an error in the last Webster under *open* also. It is described as "imp. from an hypothetical *eópan*."

Similar want of etymological accuracy is found in a long talk about *as*, as a pronoun identical with the German *es* (44, not in Rolfe); about *so* as merely the Mæso-Gothic demonstrative pronoun (57); and in speaking of *are* as having "no representative in written Saxon" (559). *Earon* is found in the oldest Anglo-Saxon Psalms, and *aron* is abundant in the Durham book. These forms are parallel with Old Norse *erum*, Swedish *aeren*, Danish *êre*, and are from the same root as Anglo-Saxon *eam*, *eart*, English *am*, *art*, Latin *s-um*, Greek *εἰ-μί*, Sanskrit *as-mi*. The article on *are* in the last Webster is wholly at fault. It gives the English *are*, "from Sw. *vara*, Dan. *vaere*; . . . *v* or *w* being lost." More vulgar blunders are giving *chance* (*cadentia*) as from "the *cas* of the Latin *cas-us* strengthened by the common expedient of inserting an *n*" (69); *time* (Anglo-Saxon *tîma*, Old Norse *tîmi*) as from "French *tems* or *temps*, the Latin *tempus*," and the like.

The work of the American editor is chiefly upon these notes. It is admirably done throughout. The additional illustrations are numerous; they are always pertinent and interesting, and they show scholarship of the right sort. The omissions are well judged. Many errors and careless remarks are deleted. Where notes are rewritten, they are clearer and briefer. We notice only note 124. Craik's suggestion that *thews*, in Shakespeare's sense of "muscular powers," *may be* from the same word as *thighs*, is perhaps better than the positive statement that it is so. Layamon's *theauwe* is plainly from *theaw*, and the cases are not

rare in the earlier language where the "*gôde theowes*," or "*thewes*," descriptive of a hero, might be easily taken, or mistaken, to mean bodily powers. Shakespeare seems to have so taken it, as he took *exorcise* to mean to raise a spirit.

We have happened to notice the words *aye* and *hug* in the index, though they are omitted from the notes. Some other references are perhaps of the same sort. In the American edition, *Saxon* is used for *Anglo-Saxon* throughout; but *Saxon* ought to be reserved for the description of those words, roots, and forms which are common to the Old Saxon and Anglo-Saxon.

Mr. Rolfe has found this book useful in teaching a class in school, and he hopes that other schools will use it, as well as students of Shakespeare out of school. We hope so too. The almost total neglect of the philological study of the English classics in our high schools and colleges is pretty generally felt to be a pity, if not a shame; and most of our best colleges and seminaries are discussing new courses of English. Many of them are already trying experiments. Corson's edition of Chaucer's "*Legende of Good Women*" has been used to some extent, as Rolfe used Craik. But of all books for awakening interest, for stimulating thought, suggesting criticism, prompting happy forms of English speech, and for a groundwork for general philological study, Shakespeare is undoubtedly the best. And of all the plays of Shakespeare, "*Julius Cæsar*" is best fitted for class study. The story is familiar, the characters are well known. The unity of the play is easily seen in respect to its controlling course of thought and feeling, and the development of character and events. The relations of subordinate characters and events to this central current are easily thought out. There is much declamation, and long-continued, striking dialogue, which give occasion for the study of rhetorical art. The language throughout is simple, and, for Shakespeare, bears the application of school grammars, dictionaries, and rhetorics remarkably well. The versification is also very regular and simple. We have sometimes thought that Shakespeare had revised this play to publish it himself, and that this, rather than the time at which it was written, is the reason why the versification and diction differ so much from that of "*Coriolanus*" and "*Antony and Cleopatra*." "*Venus and Adonis*" and "*The Rape of Lucrece*" show what sort of subjects he would have chosen, and how he would have filed his lines, if he had prepared a play for the press. The topics of thought and conversation are such as may be discussed in class without sentimentality, and without offence, and such as are of fresh interest to each generation of mankind. The passion of love is absent. And we have at last a good verbal commentary for class use. Why should not all good teachers of

English, who are lovers of Shakespeare, realize the substance of Arnold's wish when he says, "What a treat it would be to teach Shakespeare to a good class of young Greeks in regenerate Athens ; to dwell upon him line by line and word by word ; and so to get all his pictures and thoughts leisurely into one's mind, till I verily think one would, after a time, almost give out light in the dark, after having been steeped, as it were, in such an atmosphere of brilliance." From this point of view we see some short-comings in this book for a text-book. It is, in the main, only a grammatical and lexical explanation of hard words which are found in Shakespeare. But to know these is not to know the language of Shakespeare. It is not in these that his powers lie. A mastery of all of them would not unlock one of his secrets. The proper study of the language of Shakespeare has to do, not with what antiquarians must explain to us, but with what comes home to us most easily and directly ; — these touches of nature which make the whole world kin ; these coils of words, charged with electrical life, which send a thrill to every heart ; these hard knots where so much sound sense is tied up so tightly ; these leaps of thought which grammarians balk at, — all these means, simpler and more vivid than reason can command, which our great poet has found to convey thought or feeling, and which the linguistic sense of the people has recognized as living powers which it cannot let die, — these beamings and breathings of genius are the language of Shakespeare. The student of it asks, In what is it that Shakespeare's language differs from that of other men ? Is the syntax strange ? Is the diction peculiar ? What can we learn of his handling of grammatical forms from the analysis of large portions of his plays ? In what proportion does he use the Anglo-Saxon and other elements of our language ? How far does his power depend on the number of words he uses ? how far on his ability to create musical combinations of sound ? Are his thoughts prompted by this wonderful music, or do they shape the music, or are thought and expression one in Shakespeare ? What of all this belongs to the man ? what to the age ? what to the nature in which he lived ? Can we explain any of the peculiarities of his speech from the surroundings of his early or of his London life ? Little help can be had in such inquiries and study from Craik's "English of Shakespeare." But one great difficulty in teaching and studying English is the fatal facility of extemporizing lessons or opinions, which makes it hard to dwell on a passage and study it word by word ; and such notes as these may make us linger over these charmed lines, and so indirectly help us to a more thorough knowledge and intelligent love of Shakespeare and his language.